

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IS
SUBJECT: INITIAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE
STATEMENT ON "DEFENSIBLE BORDERS"

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN TODAY'S JERUSALEM POST.
IT WAS WRITTEN BY THE POST'S DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT,
DAVID LANDAU, AND IS ONE OF THE FIRST REASONED COMMENTS ON
THE PRESIDENT'S EXPLANATION OF DEFENSIBLE BORDERS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: 'NEW DEPARTURE,' SAY OBSERVERS--BUT POINT UP
GAP ON BORDERS. PRESIDENT CARTER'S DOCTRINE OF "DEFENSE
LINES" WAS REGARDED IN JERUSALEM LAST NIGHT AS A MAJOR NEW
DEPARTURE. HIGHLY-PLACED OBSERVERS POINTED OUT THAT THIS
WAS THE FIRST TIME THE U.S. HAD EVER ACCEPTED THE ISRAELI
ARGUMENT THAT THE 1967 LINES CANNOT PROVIDE SECURITY AND
NEED TO BE TANGIBLY BOLSTERED.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, OF COURSE, THE OBSERVERS RECOGNIZED
RUEFULLY THAT CARTER WAS CALLING FOR ISRAEL ULTIMATELY
TO SHRINK AGAIN MORE OR LESS TO ITS PRE-1967 SIZE.

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PLAINLY, THEY SAID, THIS DEMAND HIGHLIGHTED THE YAWNING
GULF BETWEEN THE ISRAELI AND AMERICAN POSITIONS--AND
ISRAELI EFFORTS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD WOULD BE DIRECTED
AT SEEKING TO NARROW THE GAP.

4. BUT THE AMERICAN POSITION ON THE FINAL BORDERS WAS
AFTER ALL NOT NEW. WASHINGTON HAD NEVER REALLY WAVERED

FROM THE ROGERS PLAN IN THAT RESPECT. IF SOME ISRAELIS HAD BEEN LULLED INTO COMFORTABLE DELUSIONS DURING THE KISSINGER YEARS, WHEN THE ADMINISTRATION HAD STUDIEDLY AVOIDED FORMULATING ITS PEACE MAP, THEY WOULD NOW BE SHARPLY BROUGHT BACK TO REALITY.

5. WHAT WAS NEW--AND FAVORABLE FROM ISRAEL'S VIEWPOINT-- WAS THE PRESIDENT'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN "LEGAL BORDERS" AND "DEFENSE LINES" AND HIS STATEMENT THAT "THERE MAY BE EXTENSIONS OF ISRAELI DEFENSE CAPABILITY BEYOND THE PERMANENT AND RECOGNIZED BORDERS."

6. THIS WAS THE ONE MAJOR ELEMENT IN CARTER'S SCENARIO WHICH WAS NOT PRESENT IN THE REPORT OF THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, ISSUED IN DECEMBER 1975 BY A DISTINGUISHED PANEL THAT INCLUDED PROFESSOR ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, NOW CARTER'S SECURITY ADVISER. THE BROOKINGS REPORT FORESHADOWED THE OTHER KEY ELEMENTS IN THE PRESIDENT'S PRESENTATION YESTERDAY: ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN STAGES AND AN ULTIMATE SITUATION OF FULL PEACE.

7. SOME INFORMED SOURCES HERE BELIEVE THE ADDITION OF THE "DEFENSE LINES" CONCEPT TO THE OVERALL BROOKINGS SCENARIO FOLLOWED PROFESSOR BRZEZINSKI'S VISIT TO ISRAEL LAST YEAR. HE WAS TAKEN TO SOME OF THE MOST SENSITIVE SPOTS ON THE 1967 BORDERS--TULKARM, THE GOLAN HEIGHTS--AND CAME AWAY NOTICEABLY IMPRESSED. IN A FINAL CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON HE RAISED THE IDEA OF AN ISRAELI MILITARY PRESENCE AT STRATEGIC POINTS BEYOND UNCLASSIFIED

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THE POLITICAL BORDERS, STATIONED ON LAND THAT WOULD NOT BE CLAIMED BY ISRAEL AS HER OWN, BUT WOULD PERHAPS BE LEASED FROM THE NEIGHBORING ARAB STATE FOR A PERIOD OF TIME.

8. OTHER POINTS NOTED BY OBSERVERS HERE IN A FIRST ASSESSMENT OF THE CARTER STATEMENT:

--THERE WAS ONLY ONE BRIEF AND PEDESTRIAN MENTION OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, AND NO SUPPORT AT ALL FOR A SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE. THE ARABS ARE EXPECTED TO PROTEST LOUDLY AT THIS OMISSION--AS AT CARTER'S ENTERTAINING THE NOTION OF AN ISRAELI PRESENCE ON RETURNED ARAB LANDS.

--WHILE THE PRESIDENT STRESSED THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATION AND AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES, AND DENIED ANY U.S. INTENTION OF DICTATING TERMS, HE CLEARLY SEES AMERICA'S ROLE OF MIDDLEMAN AS BY NO MEANS CONFINED TO EXTENDING GOOD OFFICES. HIS STATEMENT YESTERDAY AMOUNTED IN EFFECT TO A DETAILED BLUEPRINT OF HOW HE WOULD LIKE TO

SEE EVENTS SHAPING UP IN THIS REGION IN THE YEARS
AHEAD. AS SUCH IT MARKS A WATERSHED IN THE HISTORY OF
WASHINGTON'S DIPLOMATIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE AFFAIRS OF
THE AREA. END TEXT.
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